

REMARKS

The claims have been amended better to distinguish patentably the present invention from the prior art and to overcome the formal criticisms of the claims.

Claim 11 has been amended to include a phrase that had been added to other independent Claims 14 and 28, namely that the water-insoluble matrix does not contain an acid anhydride group, a carboxyl group, a hydroxyl group, an epoxy group, and an amino group. Claims 14 and 27 have been amended for the reasons discussed below. The claims before the Examiner remain Claims 11, 14, 27-29, and 33.

The rejection of Claims 14, 27, 29, and 33 under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112 is noted and addressed.

Claim 14 was said to be unclear regarding what was intended to be the item “consisting essentially of.” The claim has been amended to make it clear that it is indeed the water-insoluble matrix that is so restricted. A misspelled word has been corrected in Claim 14 also.

Claim 27 has been amended to specify that the water-insoluble matrix contains 30 to 70% of uncrosslinked ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymer and 30 to 70% of the polyolefinic resin that is uncrosslinked. Claim 14 from which Claim 27 depends refers to both crosslinked and uncrosslinked polymers, Claim 27 is thus a proper claim. The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned should she believe other language is more appropriate.

The rejection of Claims 11, 14, 27-29, and 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Hasegawa et al. ‘264 is respectfully traversed. The Examiner states that she is relying upon the disclosure in the reference regarding the make up of component [A], which can be two or more crosslinkable elastomers, and that the present claims do not patentably distinguish thereover. The Examiner also asserts that the disclosure in the reference at column 5, lines 58-61 shows that component [B], the “water-insoluble substance,” does not

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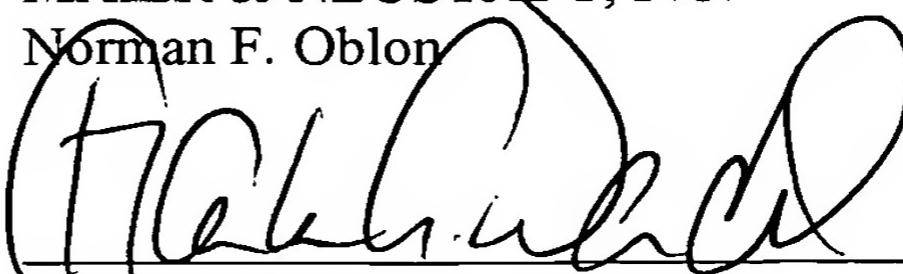
form part of the matrix in one embodiment of the Hasegawa et al. '264 invention. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that a reading of the entire paragraph at column 5, lines 57 to 61 establishes that the patentees intend the composition to contain both [A] and [B]. The paragraph merely indicates that in one embodiment [B] may be dispersed in the matrix by crosslinking [A] alone and in another embodiment the matrix material can constitute [B] crosslinked with [A]. The overall product is still the matrix, which is confirmed from a reading of the patent claims; [B] is always present. The independent claims here all contain the phrase "consists essentially of" or "consisting essentially of" to characterize the water-insoluble matrix. The present claims patentably distinguish over the reference because the claims exclude the mandatory [B] component of Hasegawa et al. '264 in the water-insoluble matrix.

In view of the foregoing revisions and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in immediate condition for allowance and a USPTO paper to those ends is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned if additional changes are required in the case prior to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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